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POEMS. By W. H. Holcombe, LL.D. Mason Brothers, Publishers.

Mr. Holcombe is professor of civil, constitutional, and international law in the University of Virginia. He is also a poet; not, perhaps, of the highest order, but nevertheless one who sings sweetly enough at times, gives us delicately-drawn pictures of home, possesses deep feeling, a clear and tender conception, and true sympathy with nature. He is, however, most successful when dealing with those gentle and soothing subjects which afford the highest pleasure to the sensitive imagination. Rarely have we seen a book more exquisitely got up. It is printed on tinted paper, and discovers a taste in the externals of book-making that reflects the highest credit on the publishers.

We have selected the following as a specimen of Mr. Holcombe's poems :

UNCLE JERRY.

Why, Jerry ! what means all this sadness and fear ?
Here's your bitters, man ! why do you cry ?
Who told you I'd sell you ? the trader that's here ?
By zounds, sir ! he told you a lie !
When I sell the gold ring from my dead mother's hand,
Or the sword which my grandfather bore,
When at Guil'ford his troopers made such a bold stand,
I will sell you,—and not before !

Why, don't you remember my face as a boy's,
When often I sat on your knee,
Whilst you sang in your rugged, monotonous voice,
Your foolish old ballads to me ?
I wept at your sad ones, and laughed at your gay,
And made you repeat them all o'er ;
Ah ! when I forgot my life's happiest day,
I will sell you,—and not before !

You made me the boat which I launched on the tide,
And my traps for the birds in the snow ;
You led my bay pony, and taught me to ride,
And half the good things which I know ;
You wept like a child when they sent me to school,
To be absent for six months or more ;
When you are a villain, or I am a fool,
I will sell you,—and not before !

If poverty's cup I am sentenced to drain,
I will part with you—last of them all ;
Your kindness, old Jerry, would double my pain,
And your sorrows embitter my fall :
If fate or misfortune should cause us to part,
There's a God will unite us once more ;
So drink my good health, and console your old heart,
And love me, and serve me, as you have before.

COUSIN MAUD AND ROSAMOND. (A Novel.) By Mrs. Mary J. Holmes. Simeon Barker & Co., Publishers.

Mrs. Holmes is a writer but little known to that portion of the literary world of New York which judges the efforts of authors by the more severe rules of high art, and sets its face obstinately against everything that does not come up to it. But between the great reading public and the stickler for high art and its demands, we frequently see the widest difference of opinion as to what is good and useful, whether to interest the reader or to impress a moral. To more than ordinary natural abilities, Mrs. Holmes unites a keen appreciation of human nature in its simplest forms, and these she deals with in a manner that never fails to interest the reader. She addresses herself to

what is called the popular rather than the critical reader, and draws the homely materials of which she weaves her interesting web from those pleasant hamlets in the rural districts where the artificial gaud of society has not yet intruded, and where men and women talk like sensible beings, and have nothing to fear from those vices common to large cities. In a word, she tells pleasant and very natural stories of country life, and invests her characters (not always well worked out) with the pure spirit of virtue and love. Judging Mrs. Holmes purely as a novelist, she does not come up to a high standard. Her novels contain little if any plot, and are defective in construction. Construction and plot-making are evidently things she has not studied. Nor is she always happy in developing such plots as she attempts. These are things, however, the popular reader cares but little about; and we have hinted at the deficiency because we believe that a writer of such good natural abilities might give a more lasting value to her works by closer attention to those rules of art which cannot be altogether departed from, not even by a popular writer. Mrs. Holmes does not affect style or elegance in composition. Indeed, it is evident that she composes too hastily, since her sentences are often loose and negligent, and her choice of words not good. We should say her taste for language had been formed in the West, where a broader license is given to a writer in the construction of sentences, and the propriety of words rarely if ever subjected to severe criticism. And yet even these defects may have their advantages with the "popular reader," who wants nothing to do with your fine writer, and has an honest dislike of the ornaments of language. Perhaps Mrs. Holmes owes her success to the fact that she considers it sufficient to make herself fully understood by the class of readers she addresses.

SAY AND SEAL. (A Novel in 2 vols.) By the author of "Wide, Wide World," and the author of "Dollars and Cents." J. B. Lippencott & Co., Publishers.

The scenes of this clever novel—for it has great merit, notwithstanding its faults of style,—are laid in the very unromantic state of Connecticut. Not in a forsaken and neglected hamlet, but near a bright, thriving village, full of school committees, bustling spinsters, busy workmen, and money-making shopkeepers, all unsophisticated, but very shrewd. There is the busy old housekeeper and her bustling daughter, both bubbling over with simplicity and activity. The inquisitive old maid, of staid manners, and highly moral, is painted to the very life. There is also a Mr. Linden, an eccentric schoolmaster, who is everybody's guest, talks learnedly on all manner of subjects, and contrives not to make himself understood on any. Mr. Linden is an excessively dull gentleman, but our authors have succeeded in making him perform well an interesting part in the story. The book is a clever and well-drawn picture of life in the country, and our fair authors have succeeded in investing it with a deep interest, notwithstanding the rough quality of the materials they had to work with. It may be objected to by some, that the dialogue is at times heavy, and perhaps too diffuse; but it must be confessed that the characters are drawn with great fidelity to nature, and this may in a measure account for what some of our more learned critics, who only need to feel a book to tell what is in it, are inclined to set down for dullness. It must also be remembered, that there is but little of the strange, picturesque, or even sentimental in the characters who make up the daily life of our country villages. In the